

Organic Product Frequently Asked Questions

What is Organic Food?

Organic food is food that is grown and processed without the use of synthetic chemicals. Organic crops are grown without the use of synthetic fertilizers or pesticides for at least three years prior to harvest. Cover crops, compost and other natural fertilizers are used for maintaining soil fertility; biological control and natural pesticides are used for pest control. Organic livestock production requires that animals are fed organic feed, have access to pasture or the outside, and prohibits the use of antibiotics and hormones.

What has to be certified?

Production, handling and livestock operations that are intended to be sold, labeled or represented as organic, 100% organic or made with organic ingredients.

Do I need to be certified?

If you plan to sell organic products, yes. Certified organic means that an independent third party has verified that the organic standards have been met. Utah state law requires that products making organic claims must be from certified organic sources.

How do I qualify to become an organic producer?

The land shall have no prohibited substances applied to it for a period of three years immediately preceding the harvest of the crop.

Can pesticides/fertilizers be used in organic crop production.

Yes, provided that they are in the list of allowed substances in organic production and handling.

Where do organic standards come from?

To prevent the confusion of all 50 states developing separate organic standards, the differences of which could be significant, as well as international standards that must be considered, The USDA has been involved with a movement to establish a set of national organic standards. This has become critical to clarify the meaning of **organic** for everyone involved. With national standards, organic producers across the country can follow the same guidelines and meet universal standards. Individual states are then required to adopt these national standards as a minimum for their own laws, and may become accredited with the USDA to be certifiers of organic programs. If they choose, states are free to adopt stricter standards if they perceive a need.

Do I need to apply every year?

Organic certification is an annual procedure. An application and fee will need to be submitted to UDAF every year.

How does one become certified to produce an organic crop?

Any crop or wild harvested area is inspected and documented by records that are in compliance with the Utah Organic Standards.

Will my farm be inspected by UDAF

An Organic Food Program Inspector that has been federally accredited by the USDA, and fully qualified to certify for UDAF will inspect organic production areas, ask questions regarding organic production practices, and request to review organic production and sales records.

I have a small family organic garden. Do I need to be certified to sell my produce?

If you make claims your produce is ~~l~~organic you will be required to certify.

When I sell my certified raw organic produce, would I have to put the Utah organic seal on each unit?

No. Proof of organic certification would suffice in this case, to the buyer or upon request of the UDAF. Labeling of each unit would be an option only.

Does my company have to be certified to handle and distribute organic produce?

No. You would be required to prevent co-mingling and contact with prohibited substances with respect to any organic product. You must maintain records as required in the Utah Organic Standards (R68-20).

Can genetically modified organisms (GMO=s) be certified as organic?

No, they are not possible under natural conditions

What is a buffer zone?

It is land that adjoins an organically managed area that serves to protect the area from contamination by prohibited materials.

Can I use raw animal manure in my organic farm operation?

Yes, if it is incorporated in the soil not less than 120 days prior to the harvest of the crop whose edible portion has direct contact with soil surface, or 90 days for a crop whose edible portion does not have direct contact with the soil surface. Composted materials must be in the list of allowed substances in organic production and handling.

What is Organic feed?

Organic livestock standards require that animals be raised on organic feed. Organic feed is produced without the use of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides for at least three years prior to harvest. Organic feed can have some feed additives such as vitamins, minerals, and probiotics added to it as long as they are listed in the approved list of organic substances.

How do I contact the Organic Program at the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food?

If you have questions, please call the office:

Dick Wilson 801-538-7180

Seth Winterton 801-538-7141

E-mail: agmain.dwilson@state.ut.us

agmain.swintert@state.ut.us

mail: Utah Department of Agriculture and Food
Organic Program
Box 146500
Salt Lake City, UT 84114-6500